

# **Trip Report IRC Umbrella Grant Croatia and Bosnia**

**November 19 - 24, 1996**

*by*

**Maggi Alexander**

The report was conducted under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development. The project was conducted by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund Contract (Project No. 936-6004.59) of TvT Associates, contract No. HRN-6004-C-5004. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily express those of TvT Associates.

Additional information or copies of this report can be obtained by contacting:

Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund Project  
1601 N. Kent St., Suite 1104  
Arlington, VA 22209

## **Table of Contents**

---

Trip Objectives .....	1
General Observations and Learnings .....	1
Non-profit Sector .....	1
Children and Youth Sector .....	1
Umbrella Grant: .....	2
Recommended Scope of Work .....	2
Strengthen IRC Umbrella Grants Staff Capacity .....	3
Identify Local Resources for Children and Youth .....	3
One-on One Training and Consultation with Sub-Grantees on Youth Work .....	3
Reinforcement & Networking Around Common Issues .....	3
Attachment A-Itinerary .....	4
Attachment B-Meeting Notes .....	6
Attachment C-Seminar report .....	15

## 1. Trip Objectives

The objectives of this short trip were to: (1) meet with the IRC Umbrella Grant Croatia and Bosnia Teams to gain a general overview of their programs and operations; (2) meet with IRC's sub-grantees, particularly in the youth area, to develop a broad understanding of their work and priority issues of concern; (3) identify with IRC strategies to strengthen its work with youth organizations; (4) meet with Jeremy Condor to learn from his experience working with IRC and sub-grantees; and (5) attend a two-day seminar on organizational development issues with the sub-grantees.

As this was my first visit to Croatia and time was limited, this trip was intended as a general orientation. Meetings were held with IRC Umbrella Grant Teams from Croatia, Bosnia and several sub-grantees working with youth. However, it was not possible to see youth programs in operation or conduct program assessments.

## 2. General Observations and Learnings:

**Non-profit Sector:** Democracy came, but before it had a chance to develop the war started. This has profoundly affected the development of civil society and non-profit organizations in Bosnia and Croatia. The non-profit sector emerged during a time of crisis and naturally organizations focused on emergency work. Now that the war has ended, the NGO sector faces the very difficult challenge of re-creating itself and making the transition from emergency-relief activities towards more sustainable, development approaches. This transition will require a shift in mentality away from remedial relief orientations towards empowering members of society to address their own needs.

This transition or re-creation of the nonprofit sector is taking place within a broader context that is not favorable towards civil organizations. Like other countries in East Central Europe (ECE), the legal and tax laws governing non-profits in both Bosnia and Croatia are very restrictive and create disincentives for local philanthropy. The non-profit sector also confronts issues common throughout ECE and the world such as: financial sustainability, management, staff capacity and burn-out, lack of long-term planning, and fragmentation and competition in the sector.

**Children and Youth Sector:** Parallel to the transition taking place within the entire non-profit sector, work with young people needs to move away from remedial and "problem" focused programs and move towards approaches that focus on positive youth development. Rather than addressing specific problems (drugs, aids etc.) it is important to develop with young people initiatives that will stimulate their confidence, self esteem, positive decision-making, and involvement.

Traditionally, young people in Croatia have not been given the opportunity to express their opinions nor play an active role in society. In schools they are taught in dictatorial styles with little opportunity to express themselves. Many of the NGOs which emerged during the war

understandably viewed children and youth as beneficiaries. Today the situation is changing and many of these organizations need assistance to change the way they view young people in their programs. During my visit, I met with six sub-grantees working with youth. All of these programs are trying to increase their level of youth participation but are not sure how. In addition, there is no material available about the situation of children and youth today and their opinions and aspirations for the future.

**Umbrella Grant:** In addition to gaining a general understanding of the Umbrella Grant's operations in Croatia (and to a lesser degree Bosnia), we also discussed the future challenges, particularly related to long-term sustainability. The Umbrella Grant in Bosnia and Croatia have youth as a priority in their 1997 workplan, but they expressed the need to develop their strategic objectives more in line with youth work and to strengthen their own capacity to provide support to sub-grantees in this area.

There are seven sub-grantees in Croatia that work with children and/or youth. These include:

Bedem Ljubavi (in Zagreb)\*  
Daisy "Tratincica" (in Vinkovci)\*  
Duga: Children and Youth Aid Center (in Daruvar)\*  
My Neighbor (in Novska)\*  
Prijatelj (outskirts of Zagreb)\*  
Psychological Help for Adolescents and Families (Split)\*  
Vukovar Youth Organization (in Vukovar)

The level of youth participation in each of these programs varies widely, as does the strength of the programs. I was able to meet with all representatives from programs marked with a (\*), however, I did not see program activities and it is difficult to comment on individual sub-grantees (see meeting notes for more information).

### **3. Recommended Scope of Work:**

In looking ahead at ways that the IRC Umbrella Grants could strengthen their work with youth programs, the following recommendations came out of discussions with program staff and sub-grantees:

**Strengthen IRC Umbrella Grants Staff Capacity-** If outside consultants are contracted, they should work in tandem with IRC local staff for a two-way learning process. The local staff member has already developed a strong working relationship with sub-grantees and can provide greater contextual understanding.

**Identify Local Resources for Children and Youth-** There is a need to identify any local “gurus” in the children and youth field that might be able to provide ongoing assistance to IRC Umbrella Grant staff and sub-grantees.

**One-on-One Training and Consultation with Sub-Grantees on Youth Work-** In the initial period, IRC staff and possibly an outside consultant with experience in youth work should spend time working with each of the seven sub-grantees listed above to achieve the following:

- Assess the current work with children and youth.
- Share ideas and models from other local and international programs.
- Develop a plan to strengthen the existing work with young people, particularly in increasing youth participation.
- Develop benchmarks and indicators to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Work with the sub-grantees as they begin to implement changes.

The exact nature of the work depends on each sub-grantee and the goals of their program. This is also true in defining indicators to measure the impact of the programs. An output of this process would be tailor-made monitoring and evaluation guidelines.

**Reinforcement & Networking Around Common Issues-** After working with each of the sub-grantees on their particular program, common themes are likely to emerge. The Umbrella Grant can help to facilitate meetings or program exchanges so that programs can come together and discuss issues of common concern and interest. Other vehicles may become useful to increase communication among the groups.

If there were more time, I would recommend some kind of a “quick-and-dirty” needs assessment of the children and youth sector in the country (including non-profit, governmental, and private services and resources available). However, given that only 19 months are remaining, I recommend the faster and direct approach of working with each organization individually to strengthen the quality of programming with children and youth.

I do not think that workshops or seminars would be very useful at this time because program staff need help with the “how-tos”. In the future, there may be workshops that could be helpful for the whole sector.

For further information, please see:  
Attachments A-Itinerary  
Attachments B-Meeting Notes  
Attachments C-Seminar report

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **ITINERARY - MAGGI ALEXANDER**

#### **CROATIA 19 to 24 November 1996**

##### **Tuesday 19 November 1996**

17:47 Depart Kzoo American Airlines (*Delta flight was cancelled*)  
17:47 Arrive Chicago O'Hare  
20:40 Depart Chicago American Airlines

##### **Wednesday 20 November 1996**

10:25 Arrive London Heathrow

*(Plane did not arrive to London until @14:00 due to equipment problem on airline. Due to miss connection stay overnight in London at airport hotel).*

**Hotel:** IBIS 3 Cardington Street, London NW1 2LW  
Tel: 44-171-917-6972 Fax: 44-171-917-6971

##### **Thursday 21 November 1996**

07:00 Depart London British Midland  
09:35 Arrive Zurich  
10:35 Depart Zurich Croatia Airline  
11:50 Arrive Zagreb  
Met by David Shimkus, Program Officer, IRC  
Pero Vrucinic, Liaison/Communication Officer IRC.

**Hotel:** Sheraton , 2 Kneza Borne 1000 Zagreb Croatia (38501) 4550-770

13:00 Meeting with Bedem Ljubavi  
15:00 Meeting with Prijatelj Youth Community, Kozari Bok  
17:00 Meeting with J. Condor and IRC staff  
18:00 Dinner with Bosnia Team

##### **Friday 22 November 1996**

08:00 Seminar on Organizational Transition with J. Condor

Break: Met with Josip and Vesna Lidija of Program in Split  
Lunch Met with Jovo Paradina, Gordana Andelic, and Hrvoje Vilypek of  
"Daisy" in Tratinica.  
17:00 Met with Ruza and Damir from "My Neighbor"

**Saturday 23 November 1996**

08:00 Seminar on Organizational Transition with J. Condor  
12:00 Lunch with Sue Dwyer on Bosnia IRC-Umbrella Grant  
14:00 Seminar (continued)  
17:00 Meeting with Croatia IRC Umbrella Team Members on scope of  
work for youth development  
19:00 Dinner with J. Condor

**Sunday 24 November 1996**

07:00 Depart Zagreb, Croatia Airlines  
Arrive Zurich  
Depart Zurich Delta  
Arrive Cincinnati  
Depart Cincinnati Comair (Delta Connection)  
16:55 Arrive Kalamazoo

**Contact Addresses:**

IRC in Croatia  
Tel: 011-385-1-455-0770  
Fax: 455-08-98

Cathy Savino  
wk. (703) 516-9166  
Fax: (703) 516-9188  
hm. (703) 548-0679



## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **MEETING NOTES**

*Maggi Alexander, 21 -23 November 1996, Croatia*

**David Shimkus, Program Officer**  
**Pero Vrucinic, Communication, Liaison**  
**International Rescue Committee Umbrella Grant for Trauma and Reunification Iblerov**  
**Trg 9/4th floor**  
**1000 Zagreb Croatia**  
**Tel: (38501) 4550-770, 4550-005, 4552-661**  
**Fax:(38501) 4550-898**  
**email dshimkus@alf.tel.hr**

I was met at the airport by David and Pero who provided me with a general introduction of the NGO sector in Croatia, IRC, and their work with sub-grantees. David had just returned from delivering cement to a sub-grantee in Vukovar, Eastern Croatia. The area is occupied by Serbs, confronted with serious security issues, and affected by the presence of UN troops. Yet, according to David, it still has one of best youth initiatives. Young people are involved in building the program, laying cement. In Croatian society, most youth do not have an active role in the process of reconstruction. Programs like Vukovar are greatly needed to increase youth participation and involvement.

Volunteering is often perceived wearily by Croatians because under communism, volunteer work was forced rather than developed by the individual's choice and initiative. As a result people are weary of coercion.

Like much of ECE, non-profit organizations are a totally new phenomena in Croatia. The present legal framework is very restrictive. More than 150,000 individuals signed a protest against the NGO law. With the existing law, the government has the right to takeover property at any time it deems the NGO is not working well. NGOs are also required to have 20 people on their Board of Directors. Donations to NGOs are taxed by 30% (donor must pay this). There are virtually no indigenous foundations because the government has the right to control finances and appoint directors. There are 15,000 registered NGOs of which only 1,500 (or 10%) are active.

Since the war, the categories of beneficiaries have been changing. For example, there is an increasing percentage of the population that are pensioners. NGOs need to transition from emergency relief work to addressing ongoing and emerging social problems. Privatization controlled by HDZ party. HDZ also controls the Church. The government claims some NGOs misused funds, likewise, government is also criticized for misuse of funds.

Under the Umbrella Grant, 6 out of 11 sub-grantees work with youth, primarily between 10-

15 years of age.

**Ana Lisak, Director**  
**Marija Lacko**  
**Coordinator of Program Activities**  
**Kristina Krizanac, Translator**  
**Ksenija Dabetic, Psychologist**  
**Bedem Ljubavi (Mothers for Peace or Chain of Love)**  
**Vlaska 70 A Zagreb, Croatia**  
**Tel: 385-1-4551-056**  
**Fax:385-1-4551-861**

Organization was formed in 1991 to help young men 18-23 recruited in the army of the former Yugoslavia. Organization became heavily involved in displaced persons and refugees (women and children). Now that there are less refugees and displaced children they are beginning to work with all children. They are in the process of defining new ways of working. They will conduct activities and "workshops" with children during out-of-school hours such as theater, music, sports, school homework, excursions. Providing psycho-social assistance and helping children learn to express themselves.

Ana is involved in networking broadly to strengthen the NGO sector. Ana discussed the emergence of the NGO sector since the transition to democracy . This sector emerged and was shaped during the war, a time when primarily relief work was needed. Since the war ended, there is a need for the non-profit sector to transition to more developmental work, but many are not able to make the transition and the legal and fiscal structure is not supportive.

I asked Ana if anyone had engaged in a needs assessment on the situation and needs of children and youth. This has not been done to her knowledge. Ksenija, the Psychologist offered her views about the priority issues affecting young people in Croatia:

Education - the school system and curriculum are very ridged with little opportunity for self-expression or creativity. School occurs in two shifts, 8:00 to 14:00 and 14:00 to 20:00.

Freetime - Children are frustrated by obligatory and ridged school environments, yet afterschool there are no organized freetime activities. In many families both parents work and children are left to devise there own activities in leisure time. Children often suffer from loneliness or get involved in potentially harmful activities such as drug and alcohol use.

Affects of the War - In addition to the emotional and physical trauma caused by the war, children are finding it difficult to re-integrated into structured school environments after years of irregular schedules. Students are often behind in their studies and it is difficult to restructure school to bring them up to speed .

Youth Participation- there is a need to motivate young people to become more involved in reorganizing society, need to foster leadership skills.

Tolerance of Differences - young people need opportunities to express themselves freely and overcome prejudice.

Bedem Ljubavi does not want to compete with school, but rather compliment schools by providing activities during leisure hours. The workshops are free and not obligatory. Children are encouraged to choose activities of personal interest. Children have learned about this program from word-of-mouth. It operates during the 10 month school-year.

They offer eight workshops per week with approximately thirty children, primarily between 10-15 years old, in each workshop. There is a core group of approximately 200 children that attend the workshops regularly. An estimated 600 attend each year.

Through the workshops, the staff and volunteers get to know each child and build a rapport. Overtime they learn the history of the family and provide outreach when necessary. Parents (primarily mothers) participate as volunteers in the program.

When asked about organizational needs, Ana said that funding is the most critical concern. Due to the large number of NGOS, competition for resources is tough. They are trying to switch from primarily international to local resources, but it is extremely difficult in an environment that has no tradition of philanthropy. They are trying to shift from a system in which people expected to be taken care of to a system of self-sufficiency.

Ana is the Chairperson of the Humanitarian Network, an organization with about 130 members advocating for the rights of NGOs and more favorable legislation governing the sector. We spoke about parallel organizations throughout the ECE region and the potential to increase networking among these groups.

Staff capacity has also been a critical concern. Most of their staff are part-time or volunteer (two full-time employees, remaining 8 people are part-time and/or volunteer). Very difficult to function with part-time staff. Major issue facing the organization is how to redefine its mission and strategy given the changing circumstances.

**Tomislav Margreitner, Project Manager**  
**Sanja Oresovic, Community Organizer**  
**Prijatelj/Friend - Association of Citizens**  
**Korculanska 12 Zagreb Croatia**  
**Tel/Fax: 3851-530-402**

The International Refugee Assistance (IRSA) program of America started this program. In 1996 local staff were encouraged to create an independent organization. In March 1996 it was legally registered as a local organization but still remained in transition until May 1996. The program is funded by IRC, World Council of Churches and Soros Foundation. They

have plans for a community fundraiser in the spring (a marathon) with local sponsors.

The program started as a youth center but now they want to open it up to the whole community. This type of community center is unique in Croatia and Priatelj hopes to serve as a model for others. Most of the activities are center-based. The activities include team sports, art, non-formal literacy training, English, music, photography, and events. There are health and nutrition classes that mothers can attend after work hours. Outreach is also conducted with pensioners. Operating hours are 10:00 to 18:00 to compliment three school shifts. The local school is overcrowded, attending 1052 children in a school with the capacity of for 700 (eight to fifteen year olds). The Center has a core group of about 200, mostly children and youth, that use the center every day. About 500 people use the center every month (not sure about % of children and youth ).

The program is located in an industrial community on the outskirts of Zagreb with a population of 11,000 people. The population is characterized by poverty, high number of refugees and gypsies. Sanya does a great deal of community outreach and the center is particularly well-respected among the gypsy community. There are about 30 gypsy families or 310 individuals and the center works with most of them in some way. The Center assists with legal documents and non-formal literacy training. It also assists the gypsy community navigate other social services like health and education. They assisted a gypsy organization to write a funding proposal and secure funds. As the social workers get to know the kids they also begin outreach in families and the parents help out at the Center.

The local municipality has shown its support by providing the space. While the municipality has not provided much financial assistance, they do have a good relationship. The center is viewed as a critical service to the community which the government does not have funds to provide.

There are two full-time staff members (Center Coordinator and Director) and multi-talented part-time activity leaders. Staff capacity and rapid turn-over continues to be a difficult issue.

When asked about the level of youth involvement in the program, Tomi explained that they get involved with community surveys to find out the interests of community members. But youth are not regularly involved in the planning and organization of activities.

The program was evaluated by IRSA. There is no formal internal monitoring process, feedback is obtained from a suggestion box, through weekly staff meetings, activity log-books. In addition, the center prepares a monthly report for IRC.

According to Sanya and Tomi, the priority issues affecting youth include: high and increasing rate of delinquency; high drop-out rates after the eighth grade; not enough positive activities available in freetime; increased use of alcohol and drugs; poverty; and lack of job opportunities.

Some of the challenges facing Priatelj include: increasing collaboration with other

organizations particularly to address prevention; increasing collaboration with a governmental program called the Social Care Center to train drop-out for employment - the practical aspects are difficult; developing human resource capacity. The Center also needs assistance in strengthening their methodology to work with young people, especially adolescents. The space is for young children and older youth is mixed and can be difficult (they are trying to fix that). They naturally try to divide themselves. Staff needs training around age appropriate activities and child development. Working with adolescents is particularly challenging, they are trying to find activities that will attract and engage them. Sanya has developed some creative ways to build a relationship with the teenagers, particularly girls, are reading tarot cards.

**Jeremy Condor, USAID Consultant**

**Mirela Despotovic, IRC Manager for Croatia Programs**

**David Shimkus, Program Officer**

**Pero Vrucinic, Communications and Liaison**

**Beth Van, Hi Neighbor Program**

**Gregory McHugh, IRC Bosnia Program Officer;**

**Sue Dwyer, IRC Manager for Bosnia Programs**

**IRC Office in Croatia (see address above)**

Meeting with Jeremy Condor and IRC Umbrella Grant Staff to review objectives for the two-day seminar. Jeremy explained that he would not spoon-feed the participants but activity engage them in practical discussion with each other around issues they are facing.

**Beth Van, Hi Neighbor Program**

**Gregory McHugh, IRC Bosnia Program Officer;**

**Sue Dwyer, IRC Manager for Bosnia Programs Sue Dwyer**

**IRC Bosnia Umbrella Grant**

Beth provided me with an overview of the My Neighbor Program. My Neighbor was started by a charismatic leader, Jovan Savage PhD, who brought together a group of psychologists and teachers to create a support center during the war. This year IRC is supporting My Neighbor to open up three new centers in three locations of Northwestern Bosnia. Beth Van will provide ongoing assistance to increase staff capacity during the expansion process. My Neighbor does not have a strong structure, there is no board, management is weak, no systems to delegate workload, basic financial accounting systems, and even simple monitoring such as counting the number of beneficiaries requires assistance. My Neighbor is also addressing the issue of long-term sustainability. At present, the program is exploring funding options from ChildAid, Save the Children, UNHCR, a dutch foundation, Soros, and Mott Foundation. My Neighbor needs the assistance of IRC to manage the funds and train staff to continue the accounting process.

Beth provided the following insights regarding the psycho-social needs of families and children. First, the level of isolation is very real. Families were moved into “cleansed” towns and can not afford bus fare to travel. The guilt of the Serbs is not being addressed and there

is still struggles with righteousness. There is a great deal of denial and lack of encouragement to talk about what has happened. For example, when parents are asked how their children are doing, they answer fine and explain that they encourage their children to sing songs of pride that their fathers went to war. Yet teachers are reporting increased behavior and learning problems. There is a high number of single mothers and increased alcoholism.

My Neighbor tries to address some of the isolation by creating a community through support groups, group activities, English class and community events. Most of the psychological support happens during informal interaction.

### **21 November Radio 101 Protest**

I was privileged to spend my first evening in Croatia with 100,000 others in the main square of Zagreb in peaceful protest against the governmental closure of an independent radio station. The turn out was tremendous, every generation represented singing and lighting candles. The non-profit sector was well represented. The positive outcome of the government reopening the radio station sent an important and powerful message to the people of Croatia. This will encourage non-profits to articulate their concerns about pending legislation.

**Josip and Vesna Zec (Lidija?)**  
**Psychological Help for Adolescents and Families**  
**21000 Split**  
**Kraj Sv. Marije 1/III**  
**Tel (021)591-377**

During the morning break I met with Josip and Vesna from Split. They are very eager for advice and assistance on how to strengthen their work with adolescents. The Psychological Association of Split has been providing support in Split and nearby regions since 1991. Founded during the war, the original goal was to help refugees in their temporary environment by providing comfort, support, and inner strength during their period of exile. The Association provided free psychological, educational, and information services to the entire community. In 1992 the Association included 20 psychologists who worked on a volunteer basis.

In 1996 the funding was concluded (from who?) and now they are redefining their mission. They see a tremendous amount of loneliness and isolation among young people. Therefore, they want to continue to work with young people in a more preventative way by setting up youth clubs after school hours. In order to do this, they plan to meet with superintendents of schools and discuss the focus of their work with teachers and students. From these discussions they will develop a workplan. The youth clubs would utilize existing space in schools or communities. Vesna and Josip would like the young people to be actively involved in planning activities.

Split has a population of about 230,000 and many people live in the suburbs. After WWII the Communist government encouraged people to move to Split and built skyscrapers, yet they still farmed land in the suburbs. The result was an unusual mixture between city and village life. There is tremendous problem with drug and alcohol use. Marijuana is grown locally and used commonly even among grade school children. This leads to other drug use, heroine is the cheapest drug. Official surveys put drug use at 6,000 but other sources feel it is three times higher. Despite the problem, parents do not want to discuss drugs in schools and there is great denial.

**Jovo Paradina, Gordana Andelic, Hrvoje Vilypek, Psychologist  
Daisy (Tratincica), Psychological Support for Displaced Persons  
J. Dalmatinca 41  
32000 Vinkovci, Croatia  
(395)(32)321-147**

The program was started in April 1994 by a group of psychologists, social workers, pedagogues, and doctors in response to the emotion stress and trauma suffered by people during the war. Daisy provided direct mental health services, outreach to families, assistance for displaced persons, and support for counselors. They have one project with 10-13 year olds with activities aimed at increasing communication and expression. Activities include art, music, and word games.

When asked what types of assistance they need: (1) examples of how civil society is emerging in other parts of the world; (2) how to recruit and motivate volunteers and avoid burn-out; (3) ideas (not models) that they can recreate in their own context.

**Ruza and Damir (Last names?)  
“My Neighbor”  
44330 Novska Croatia  
(385-44) 600-558**

In 1994, My Neighbor was started to work with school-aged children through educational and entertaining workshops. The program hopes to improve social skills, increase self-esteem, strengthen relationships with family and community.

Last month (October 1996) My Neighbor started a new project to reach out to rural youth ages 14-25 through a youth club. The clubs would incorporate agriculture education, ecology, sewing, and knitting. The program aims at involving young people in activities that are productive and entertaining. Staff has met with municipalities about the program and received favorable responses. The program was advertised in villages of Novska (50 children) and Jasonova (20 children) and every child in the 7th and 8th grades signed-up.

Ruza and Damir sought me out for examples of other rural youth clubs and methodological ideas.

## **Sue Dwyer on Bosnia IRC-Umbrella Grant**

Sue explained that the timing of my visit was premature for visiting sub-grantees working with youth in Bosnia. Sue explained that she has just come on board as the new director in Bosnia and is facing many challenges. The IRC Bosnia team has just recently re-grouped and is in the process of defining their workplan and strategies for the next 19 months. We both agreed that the timing was not right for my visit, but that we would remain in contact. I am flexible and open to providing support in the future if it is appropriate.

The Bosnia team has four broad strategies: advocacy, collaboration, training, and resource development. Through these strategies they hope to increase community involvement, change the environment for NGOs and increase staff capacity (of IRC and sub-grantees).

Some of the broader questions that Sue and the Bosnia Team are looking at include: (1) understanding the current situation of sub-grantees; (2) defining community development within the Bosnia context; (3) determine if they will initiate programs or work with existing programs; (4) determine the focus of IRCs work, whether it is youth or adult; (5) how to mobilize and actively engage youth. Sue is trying to build up a resource library and is asking how much to invest when English is not the local language. Translation issues.

According to Sue the Umbrella Grant in Bosnia is lagging about two-years behind Croatia. This is due to the lack of systems due to the war, sub-grantees are not as developed, and the internal changes within IRC itself. They are just in the process of defining clear roles for staff. In addition to their work with sub-grantees, the Bosnia team is working with a mental health advisor to provide training and support, an organization development consultant (Jeremy Condor), and looking at ways to strengthen the NGO network and information sharing. They are also in the process of initiating youth work and want to increase the level of community empowerment.

Regarding youth participation and development, Sue and the Bosnia Team want to build up their capacity to provide support to their sub-grantees. In the past, outside consultants have been used in such a way that the capacity was not transferred to the Bosnia team. Any future work with consultants should be conducted in tandem with local staff to increase knowledge and capacity so that they can provide much needed ongoing support to sub-grantees.

Sue would like to begin by looking at the history of youth groups in Bosnia and develop a contextual framework. This would be similar to a needs assessment or situational analysis to identify priority areas of focus.

**Meeting with Croatia IRC Umbrella Team Members**  
**Mirela Despotovic, IRC Manager for Croatia Programs**  
**David Shimkus, Program Officer**  
**Pero Vrucinic, Communications and Liaison**  
**Jeremy Condor, Consultant**



We met after the seminar to discuss the meeting and possible next steps for work with youth: Feedback from the workshop: All agreed that this was the best seminar to date because of the high level of candor and involvement. They were surprised by the open communication. The team worked well with Jeremy to give him feedback and adjust the agenda as necessary. The weakness was the last session on workplan development. This could have been stronger.

Scope of work with youth programs: Mirela was very positive about the need to move forward to strengthen programs for young people. She received positive feedback from the sub-grantees working with youth and they actively sought me out during the seminar. Regarding next steps, Mirela and the Program Staff would like to consult with the sub-grantees about the type of assistance needed. We agreed that the best approach would be to start by spending time working with each of the sub-grantees in the youth area together with staff from IRC. The sub-grantees need help with the “how-tos,” particularly around increased youth participation, and that must be contextually driven. In the future, it might prove useful to pull sub-grantees and other youth organizations together to discuss common programmatic themes.

## **ATTACHMENT C**

### **Croatia IRC Umbrella Grant Program Summary Notes from 20-21 November 1996 Workshop “Dinosaurs or Dynamos”**

**Preface:** Below are my personal notes and impressions from the IRC workshop held 20-21 November on Organizational Development. This document is **not** intended to serve as a meeting report. The summary below is not complete nor does it accurately reflect the depth of the material covered.

**Introduction:** The purpose of the workshop was to discuss concrete organizational development issues that the Umbrella Grantees were dealing with. Unlike previous workshops on fundraising and communication in which materials were prepared in advance, the content of this workshop emerged from practical issues confronting each organization. Directors and staff of each sub-grantee had an opportunity to discuss organizational dilemmas with their peers. The workshop required a great deal of participation and involvement

**Self-Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses:** In this section, each organization had an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Following are notes from their report back to the larger group:

#### **Bedem Ljubavi (Chain of Love) - Zagreb:**

##### **Accomplishments:**

Survived during an era in which foreign donors pulled out of Croatia and 70% of local NGOs closed;

1. Successful local fundraising initiatives including the organization of a concert in the main concert hall;

Increased contact with similar organizations in other countries through participation in the Mothers for Peace World Congress where 120 like-organizations participated.

##### **Challenges/Learnings:**

An internal tension in the organization between those that are trapped in the past and resist changing. Bedem started in 1991 with the hope of preventing blood-shed of youth (sons). Internal break in the organization between those that want to move in army. Now that the war has ended, only forty of the original forward members have stayed with the organization. They realize that they must change if they want to survive and meet new realities. However, there is a tension between the members holding onto the mentality of 1991 who are resistant to changes. (\*) This problem was shared by 3 out of 7 organizations at the meeting.

## **Psychological Support for Adolescents and Family - (Split)**

### **Accomplishments:**

Personal relations within the organization have improved and strengthened unity of staff, good working climate,

The team has been able to leave the past in past and move forward as a team;

1. 100% successful in fundraising efforts to date;

Organization has clear and united vision for the future and staff/team all understand and share those goals.

### **Challenges/Learnings:**

Lack of human resources, do not have full-time employees,

Do not have good organizational and administrative systems because all of the staff are psychologists.

## **Prijatelj (friend) - Zagreb**

### **Accomplishments:**

Transitions from an American relief organization to an independent indigenous organization (IRSC decided local NGO should take over the project and staff registered as a local NGO);

Expanded program for all community not just children and youth (*my question - how are they maintaining child-focus*);

Succeeded in involving community members in running the program. By involving community members they are better able to serve community by understanding the local reality.

### **Challenge/Learnings:**

trying to include influential members of society but difficult because they were new group and need to develop their track-record and demonstrate their effectiveness.

**Example of a SWOT Analysis** Case-Study (Prijatelj): In this section, Prijatelj (Friend) agreed to share the experiences for a swot analysis. Prijatelj was recently registered as a humanitarian organization. It works with an industrial community of some 11,000 people in the outskirts of Zagreb. It's mission is to increase the ability of community members to help themselves and increase the level of community participation and cohesion. The program offers a range of sports and arts activities. In an effort to reach the most vulnerable members of its community, the program reaches to refugees and gypsies.

Strengths: (a) Fills gaps in government funding; (b) Addresses community needs quickly and in cost-effective way; (c) Little bureaucratic flab, no hierarchy or red-tape; entrepreneurial, efficient, and responsive, relevant, flexible; (d) High level of creativity and motivation; (e) Developed local trust; (f) replicable, program can be a model; (g) Involves beneficiaries; (h) Conducts evaluations with questionnaires and surveys to get feedback

and input; (i) Cohesive and committed team.

***Provocative Question: Is 100% of your team passionate and on fire about the work and mission? Do you have "passenger" in your organization? Are there time wasters?***

Weaknesses: (a) Lack of financial security; (b) Need more quality staff, constantly searching for high-energy, multi-talented staff; (c) In operation for a very short-time and still need to build more community involvement. Would like community to see itself as owners of the center rather than clients; (d) Need people of influence to help the organization, need stronger board involvement.

***Provocative Questions: Do you know where your organization is going in 1997? Do you have clear vision of where your organization is going?***

***Provocative Question: Is the community clients or are they owners in the process??? Are the beneficiaries "stakeholders"?***

Opportunities for 1997: (a) Continuity but flexibility to add new ideas; (b) Consolidation of what they have; (c) Work closer with other organizations; (d) Opportunities are found in the community but must recognize them, fundraising events are possibility.

***Provocative Question: Are donor changing priorities a threat or an opportunity? At what point do NGOs become prostitutes to donors?***

The decision if something is an opportunity or threat depends on ones perspective. Small groups met to discuss threats to their organization and reported the following:

Group Report on Common Problems and/or Threats: (a) failing to find solutions to weaknesses listed above; (b) inability to make long-term plans due to lack of financial security and time.

**Review Current Mission Statements, Are they Still Valid?** In this section grantees discussed their mission statements and asked themselves whether or not their mission was still appropriate for today's reality. Discussions focused on critical issues such as the transition from relief work to long-term development, relationships with donor organizations, and relationships with program participants.

***Provocative Question: Is your mission affected by donors interests? Should we shift because of donors interests? How can we educate donors to understand the reality?***

Discussion Points:

Groups of NGOs writing donors asking for similar types of support or putting together a group request.

- Learn to use appropriate language, for example, instead of discussing “psycho-social” we should talk about "healing" society.

Need to diversify funding sources (eg. US NGOs too reliant on government support are more service-providers-of the government). Need to balance marketing a compelling case to donors with responding to the beneficiary population.

One solution is to have local donors that can see first hand the problems.

- Need to EMPOWER local community to heal themselves.

***Provocative Question: Do you believe in people innate capacity to help themselves? Does your organization believe in peoples ability to help themselves if given the right circumstances***

Discussion Points:

Look at other ways to empower people, get out of the analytical stuff and help people to develop skills, knowledge, self-esteem.

- Many people start NGOs because they want to help but transition to helping others to help themselves
- People no longer want to be saved, they want to have a voice and gain back control over their destiny.

Need to create the conditions under which people can help themselves. Mobilize, activate people and create conditions for self-help. Help people to help themselves so that they gain self-respect.

- Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Give a man a fishing rod and teach him to fish. feed him for a life. A third version by the Catholic Liberation in Brazil - Teach the man who owns the River.

You might still need to provide psychological training - but how can you do it without further victimizing people?

Conversation with a Program to help handicapped people: People with disabilities are able to provide for themselves but need some assistance to provide the conditions. There is a need to educate and raise awareness with the rest of the population that handicapped people are healthy and capable individuals. ***Provocative Question: Do people with disabilities have power in this organization?*** Not in the organization, but they are consulted when designing projects.

*(My notes: how to shift mentality away from youth in terms of "problems to prevent" but rather, look at ways to develop their competence, connection, confidence, and character to be contributors in the present and the future).*

**Founder Syndrome - Organizational Leadership:** In this section, the Duga ("Rainbow") shared their experience and evolution from a centralized style of leadership to greater delegation of responsibilities. The team discussed in an open forum such questions as: What would happen if the Founder, Zvonko, disappeared? What is his leadership style?

Zvonko was both the founder and director of Duga. As other founders, he was compelled to take much of the work on his own shoulders. In the past year, Zvonko has worked hard to move away from centralized control to involve others in the decision-making process. His staff described his style as: *"His style and that of the organization is like having conversations. We tackle problems all together looking for the best solution."* For example, recently, staff participated in a five hour conversation to review the last five years of the organization. Today there only two people from the original team, Zvonko recognized turnover could be sign of instability.

Zvonko now feels that if he leaves the organization today, the organization would continue with the same mission.

***Q. Why? How can we be sure this organization can make it?***

A. Everyone in organization knows what they are responsible for. Everyone has clear idea about the future. No more need for the type of role he played in the beginning which was very centralist. Some one had to start the program, needed a leader. In the beginning he played all of the roles. At the beginning, very hard to motivate donors. But today the situation is difference and other staff can assume more responsibility.

***Q Is increased responsibility this given or taken?*** A. It is a combination of both - hand over and takeover at the same time as part of decentralization.

***Q. Is it difficult to give-up power, control, charisma?*** A. Zvonko thinks ever person can find these characteristics inside themselves. If they like what they are doing these characteristic will emerge naturally. Shared values are also important.

### **Transitioning From Old Values and New Values:**

What are some of the "Old Values" that NGOs operated under? What language was used?

To help  
To give  
To provide things  
To rescue

What are the “New Values?”

To heal  
To empower  
To help  
To activate  
To help people help themselves  
To raise awareness  
To involve participants  
To educate.

Discussion that the “old values” are not bad, but now we are looking at the issue of empowerment.

***Provocative Question: Are we really interested in giving people power? What is it that drives you and your organization?***

What does education mean to you? To provide someone knowledge and skills so that they take control over their own life.

**Small Group Activity:** Look at the way your program provides services and look at HOW you provide support and what needs to change in terms of your revised mission statement and efforts to increase involvement. For example are their youth on your Board, if not, why not. If you work with handicapped, where are they in the decision-making of your organization? How are you really going to involve clients? How will your organization need to change?

### **Report Back to Larger Group:**

**Psychology Support for Adolescent & Adults (Split)** - want to be more youth oriented. The old program corresponded with the old mission . New mission is to increase involvement of youth in the community. How? They will initiate establishment of youth clubs (not "form" because they want youth to be enabled to act in a new way). Do you have youth represented in the decision-making process? We foresee establishment of youth boards to decide on activities. Workshops, excursions, clubs for open discussion.

**Woman’s Rights Organization:** - Want to empower women (mission stays the same, about empowerment) - the programs will be changed so that activities are done in cooperation with women (refugees and other) council in center includes beneficiaries. Number of refugees has decreased, but number of community women has increased. What can change? Always try to adjust to changing needs. No need to change their values or the way they work because they have it right from the very beginning. *My question: is there ways they could strengthen the level of involvement? Are there difficulties they have had.* This organization always knew they were in the empowerment business.

**Bedem - Mothers for Peace** - Always responded to the perceived needs. Basically all the humanitarian organizations were started by perceived needs. Their mission has changed three times (developed it further) - it was to help women and children war victims. Today aiming towards active involvement of women and children in making their contribution to the community. More emphasis on children and change activities so they are more actively involved in community so they give more back to community. More involvement of children. They acknowledge the need to increase active involvement of youth. Our mission won't be drastically changed - the mission is developed according to the needs, but who determines the needs. In the war time the needs were determined by experts in psycho-social areas when they saw the needs were not met by the government. New mission is focusing on the reconstruction of the community. In the future, and during the process of evaluation new mission to empower people to help themselves to be able to reintegrate into the community. Words imply respect for the person and understanding that there is a flame burning inside.

One organization said they would end their program because the reality had changed. This is very important to recognize they should end the program when people are reintegrated. Typically NGOs have a difficult time to end, they always try to reinvent themselves and find out what donors want.

*A shift is visible. There is more concern to involve the participant/stakeholders in doing something for themselves. Start thinking of working with (versus for). Every time you design new project you should look back at your mission statement and think about how the participants are involved.*

**Daisy (Tratincica)** - Seems like some of the psycho-social programs are slower to adopt some new values. But it is a pleasure to see this shift. New concept in psychology are very important. When they founded their NGO they wanted to change the old concept which was victim-focused.

(My notes: there is a need to change the way we talk about participants of our program so we don't victimize them further - evoking pity versus recognizing their strength. We need to work with our donors and media so that we shift the way we think about these things. For example, in evaluating programs, how do you measure positive development versus the tradition measures of avoiding delinquency. Jeremy says donors want to hear about empowerment....Is this true Or wishful thinking? Donors need some help to show how positive approach can have impact. Donors still caught in a catch 22 where they want a compelling case and rely on a "avoidance-of-problems" mentality.

**Does the name of your organization reflect your values and new mission?** What about the Displace Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fun??? What about IR (rescue)C, Umbrella Grant for Trauma and Reunification.

**Does your management style reflect your values???** How are NGOs in Croatia owned,



managed and run? In general (not your specific NGO) - What are the greatest strengths? What are the weaknesses? What are the opportunities for change, improvement?

**Group SWOT on NGO Community in Croatia:** In this section the group was divided among Directors and Staff to look broadly at the SWOT for the NGO community in general.

**Directors Feedback about NGOs:**

Strengths: Openness, Accountability, System of reelection so that the Director can be thrown out if necessary, A new kind of NGOs is being born in ECE that will teach westerners about a better way to operate. There are things you can bring from the past and incorporate. For example, staff (rather than board) can elect director and therefore the Directors are listening to staff.

Weaknesses: Lack of experience, Not clear distribution of authority and power and jobs/role, Not clear definition of roles, Need to trust staff to do their job, Leaders of organizations must develop ability to decentralized control. People change for two reasons: they want to, or they have to. When organizations grow and expand it is forced to decentralize. Some founders can make the change, but others can not. Ridge structure, sometimes staff are very content when the system is ridged or when the Director is in total control. Sometimes staff hold Directors as gods and reinforces their own self-image. Many weaknesses go right down into threats section. Clear job descriptions are not as important in a new organization where everyone has to do everything. But when you expand or get older clear job descriptions become more important.

Opportunities: Learning and acquire new skills, choice of own destiny, new time and opportunity to direct own work;

Threats: burn-out, founder syndrome, lack of visibility in the community and understanding of NGO in the society, Hostile anti/indifferent-NGO environment (but also an opportunity implicit), directors that can not learn and change are a threat, staff that refuse to become stakeholders eg. passengers.

**So, Now What? How to Put Ideas into Practice?** Using the Bosnia Umbrella Grant as an example, participants discussed how to make sense of these issues and put into a framework to move forward. Who are we? Why do we exist (for what purpose)? What are our objectives? Who do we want to be as an organization?. What are the strategies to reach our goal?

**Bosnia IRC Umbrella Grant:**

Objectives: Advocacy, Collaboration, Resources, and Training.

Activities: All team members helped to develop activities both in individual and group activities. Because the group process allows some people to be passive, in this case they also had individual work. They looked at whether our words reflected our values - to see if we were in line. They shared their plan broadly for input by team members. Shared their outline for a WorkPlan: Goal, Purpose/Objectives/Activities/Indicators/Output and So What????

Have these results made any difference???

The development of a workplan is a practical way to move the next step.

(My thoughts: Confused strategies and objectives in presentation. Need concrete examples. Explain how to use strategic plan to monitor progress. Should have discussed the ways to use the workplan for ongoing monitoring. Did not link strategies with "business of the organization" finding their niche and realizing that they can't do everything. They should also look at other NGOs in the community and other resources to see who they can work with).

**Concluding Comments** - Participants were asked to comment on what they were taking away with them:

Do not prostitute yourself with donors.

Believe in future of non-profit sector.

Regardless of environment, change is possible if people are willing to invest time and energy, power, awareness;

A need to be adjustable and make changes to meet new situation;

Increased awareness of new stage of organizational development;

Deeper evaluation of my values and what I bring into my work,

New understanding of the "power business"

Developed ideas for a plan of action

Reconsideration about role of Boards for NGO in ECE,;

Value of NGOs, respect for self-determination.